Wymysorys language

Wymysorys (*Wymysiöeryś* IPA: [vɪ̃mɪ̃sʲøːrɪɕ] or IPA: [vɪ̃mɪ̃ɕœɜrɪɕ]), also known as **Vilamovian**, is a West Germanic language spoken by the ethnic Vilamovian minority in the small town of Wilamowice, Poland (*Wymysoü* [vɪ̃mɪ̃sɔy] in Wymysorys), on the border between Silesia and Lesser Poland, near Bielsko-Biała.[3][4] It is considered an endangered language,[3] possibly the most so of any of the Germanic languages.[5] There are probably fewer than 20[1] native users of Wymysorys, virtually all bilingual; the majority are elderly.[3]

Wymysorys	
Vilamovian	
Wymysiöeryś	
Pronunciation	[vɪ̃mɪ̃søːrɪɕ]
Native to	Poland
Region	Wilamowice
Ethnicity	Vilamovians
Native speakers	20 (2017)[1]
Language family	Indo-European
	▪ Germanic
	▪ West Germanic
	▪ High German
	▪ Central German
	▪ East Central German
	▪ Schlesisch–Wilmesau
	▪ **Wymysorys**
Writing system	Latin
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	`wym`
Glottolog	`wymy1235` (http://gl ottolog.org/resourc e/languoid/id/wymy1 235)[2]

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History

In origin, Wymysorys appears to derive from 12th-century Middle High German, with a strong influence from Low German, Dutch, Polish, Old English and perhaps Frisian.[3][6] The inhabitants of Wilamowice are thought to be descendants of German, Flemish and Scottish settlers who arrived in Poland during the 13th century. However, the inhabitants of Wilamowice always denied any connections with Germany and proclaimed their Flemish origins.[7] Although related to German, Wymysorys is not mutually intelligible with Standard German (that is the case for most other German dialects as well).[8]

Wymysorys was the vernacular language of Wilamowice until 1939–1945. However, it seems it has been in decline since the late 19th century. In 1880 as many as 92% of the town's inhabitants spoke Wymysorys (1,525 out of 1,662 people), in 1890 - only 72%, in 1900 - 67%, in 1910 - 73% again.[9] Although Wymysorys was taught in local schools (under the name of "local variety of German"), since 1875 the basic language of instruction in most schools in Austro-Hungarian Galicia was Polish.[9] During World War II and the German occupation of Poland Wymysorys was openly promoted by the Nazi administration, but after the war the tables turned: local communist authorities forbade the use of Wymysorys in any form.[9] The widespread bilingualism of the people saved most local residents from being forcibly resettled to Germany, many of them stopped teaching their children their language or even using it in daily life.[10] Although the ban was lifted after 1956, Wymysorys has been gradually replaced by Polish, especially amongst the younger generation.

Acting on a proposal by Tymoteusz Król, the Library of Congress added the Wymysorys language to the register of languages on July 18, 2007.[11] It was also registered in the International Organization for Standardization, where it received the

wym ISO 639-3 code.[4] In a 2009 UNESCO report Wymysorys has been reported as "severely endangered" and nearly extinct.[11]

Wymysorys was the language of the poetry of Florian Biesik, during the 19th century.

Revitalization

Some new revitalization efforts were started in the first decade of the 21st century, led by speaker Tymoteusz Król, whose efforts include private lessons with a group of pupils as well as compiling language records, standardizing written orthography and compiling the first ever dictionary of Wymysorys. Additionally, a new project called The Wymysiöeryśy Akademyj – Accademia Wilamowicziana or WA-AW was established under the "Artes Liberales" program at the University of Warsaw with the intention of creating a unified scholastic body for the study of the Wymysorys language.[12]

Phonology

Consonants

		Labial	Alveolar	Post-alveolar		Alveolo-palatal	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
				ret.	pal.				
Stop	voiceless	p	t̪				c	k	
	voiced	b	d̪				ɟ	ɡ	
Affricate	voiceless		t͡s̪	(t͡ʂ)	t͡ʃ	t͡ɕ			
	voiced		(d͡z)	(d͡ʐ)	(d͡ʒ)	(d͡ʑ)			
Fricative	voiceless	f	s̪	(ʂ)	ʃ	ɕ	(ç)	x	h
	voiced	v	z̪	(ʐ)	ʒ	ʑ			
Nasal		m	n̪			ɲ̟		ŋ	
Trill			r						
Lateral			l̪						
Approximant		w					j		

- Voiced stops, sibilant fricatives and affricates are regularly devoiced or voiceless in final position.
- The sounds of /x/ and /h/ are interchangeable among different speakers. The use of [x] is typically heard at the beginning of a word, possibly due to the influence of Polish, even though historically in Germanic languages, the glottal fricative [h] is typically heard.
- The series of palato-alveolar /ʃ, ʒ, t͡ʃ/ and alveolo-palatal /ɕ, ʑ, t͡ɕ/ fricative and affricate sounds, are heard interchangeably among various speakers.
- [ç] is heard in word-final position, as an allophone of /x/.
- The voiced affricates /d͡z, d͡z̪, d͡ʒ, d͡ʑ/ are only heard in Polish loanwords.
- A series of flat post-alveolar sibilants and affricates [ʂ, ʐ, t͡ʂ, d͡ʐ], are also heard in Polish loanwords, interchangeably with alveolar-palatal sounds /ɕ, ʑ, t͡ɕ, d͡ʑ/.
- The labial-velar approximant /w/ is pronounced with a lesser degree of lip rounding than in English, and is more similar to the Polish pronunciation of ł [w].[13]

Vowels

	Front		Central		Back
Close	i	y	(ɨ)	(ʉ)	u
Near-close	ɪ	ʏ			
Close-mid	e	ø	ɘ		o
Mid			ə		
Open-mid	ɛ	œ			ɔ
Open			a		ɑ

- The close-mid sound /ɘ/ is phonetically more fronted as [ɘ̟].
- Mid central vowel sounds /ɘ, ə/ are also heard close central sounds [ɨ, ʉ], among speakers.[13]

Diphthongs

	Front	Front	Back
	ascending	descending	
Close	i̯ø		
Close-mid	ɪ̯ɘ̟	ei̯	
Open-mid		œɣ	ɔi̯
Open		ai̯	
Triphthong	ɣø̯œ̯		

Alphabet

Wymysorys has been for centuries mostly a spoken language. It was not until the times of Florian Biesik, the first author of major literary works in the language, that a need for a separate version of a Latin alphabet arose. Biesik wrote most of his works in plain Polish alphabet, which he considered better-suited for the phonetics of his language.[14] In recent times Józef Gara (1929–2013), another author of works in the local language, devised a distinct Wymysorys alphabet, consisting of 34 letters derived from the Latin script and mostly based on Polish as well:

Majuscule forms (also called **uppercase** or **capital letters**)																																	
A	B	C	Ć	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	Ł	M	N	Ń	O	Ö	P	R	S	Ś	T	U	Ü	V	W	Y	Z	Ź	Ż
Minuscule forms (also called **lowercase** or **small letters**)																																	
a	b	c	ć	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	ł	m	n	ń	o	ö	p	r	s	ś	t	u	ü	v	w	y	z	ź	ż

Wilamowicean orthography includes the digraph "AO", which is treated as a separate letter.

Example words and their relationship to other languages

A sample of Wymysorys words with German, Dutch and English translations. Note that **ł** is read in Wymysorys like English **w** (as in Polish), and **w** like **v** (as in Polish and German):

English	Wymysorys	Middle High German	German	Dutch	Comment
alone	ałan	alein(e)	allein	alleen	
and	ana, an	und(e), unt	und	en	
bridge	bryk	brücke, brucke	Brücke	brug	
dolt	duł	tol, dol 'foolish, nonsensical'	toll 'mad, fantastic, wonderful'	dol 'crazy'	
hear	fulgia	< Frisian; WFris *folgje*, EFris *foulgje* 'to follow'	hören	horen	cf. German *folgen*, Dutch *volgen* 'to follow'
wholly	ganc	ganz	ganz	gans	
court	gyrycht	geriht	Gericht	gerecht	cf. German *Recht*, Dutch *recht* '(legal) right', English *right*)
dog	hund	hunt	Hund	hond	cf. English *hound*
heaven	dyr hymuł	himel	Himmel	hemel	
love	łiwa	liebe	Liebe	liefde	
a bit	a mikieła	michel 'much'	ein bisschen	een beetje	Scots *mickle*, English *much*; antonymic switch 'much' → 'little'
mother	müter	muoter	Mutter	moeder	
middle	mytuł	mittel	Mitte	middel	
no one	nimanda	nieman	niemand	niemand	
no	ny	ne, ni	nein	nee(n)	
breath	ödum	< Middle German	Atem	adem	cf. obsolete German *Odem*, Middle Franconian *Öödem*
elephant	olifant	< Dutch	Elefant	olifant	
evening	öwyt	ābent	Abend	avond	
write	śrajwa	schrīben	schreiben	schrijven	
sister	syster	swester	Schwester	zuster	
stone	śtaen	stein	Stein	steen	
drink	trynkia	trinken	trinken	drinken	
picture	obrozła	< Slavic; Polish *obraz*	Bild	beeld	
world	wełt	werlt	Welt	wereld	
winter	wynter	winter	Winter	winter	
silver	zyłwer	silber	Silber	zilver	
seven	zyjwa	< Middle German siven	sieben	zeven	
welcome	sgiöekumt	wil(le)kōme(n)	wilkommen	welkom	

Sample texts

Lord's Prayer in Wymysorys

> Ynzer Foter, dü byst ym hymuł,
>
> Daj noma zuł zajn gywajt;
>
> Daj Kyngrajch zuł dö kuma;
>
> Daj wyła zuł zajn ym hymuł an uf der aot;
>
> dos ynzer gywynłichys brut gao yns haojt;
>
> an fercaj yns ynzer siułda,
>
> wi wir aoj fercajn y ynzyn siułdigia;
>
> ny łat yns cyn zynda;

> zunder kaonst yns reta fum nistgüta.
>
> [Do Dajs ej z Kyngrajch an dy maocht, ans łaowa uf inda.]
>
> Amen

A lullaby in Wymysorys with English translation:

> Śłöf maj buwła fest!
>
> Skumma fremdy gest,
>
> Skumma muma ana fettyn,
>
> Z' brennia nysła ana epułn,
>
> Śłöf maj Jasiu fest!
>
> Sleep, my boy, soundly!
>
> Foreign guests are coming,
>
> Aunts and uncles are coming,
>
> Bringing nuts and apples,
>
> Sleep, my Johnny, soundly!

See also

- Alzenau dialect
- Silesian German
- Masurian dialect

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External links

- Wymysiöeryś – jeszcze mowa nie zginęła (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfg3jHV1TzE) at YouTube. Agencja Fotograficzna Fotorzepa. Rzeczpospolita
- The founding ceremony of the Accademia Wilamowicziana (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3-lVRDEEe4) at YouTube.
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